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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to improve students' manual keyboarding composition skill. A program was developed to integrate the other requisite skills of well-written composition, accurate punctuation and grammar, and fastidious proofreading in a structured, progressive plan. The 25 students in the Typing I Business Fundamentals class, a keyboarding class with business applications, were in grades 10-12. To develop the manual skill, the students were dictated questions requiring one-letter response, progressing to full-paragraph responses as demonstrated each day in a 5-minute warm-up of journal writing. The students received instruction in the "7s" of writing as applied to business letters; opening, closing, and informational paragraphs; rewriting poorly written letters; and practice in punctuation, grammar, and proofreading techniques. Actual business situations were used along with cooperative teaching techniques and writing games. Pretest and posttest evaluations revealed substantial improvement in written composition, punctuation and grammar, and proofreading. Each student was able to master the manual composition keyboarding skill to the extent of comfortable enjoyment and good content productivity. (Appendixes include a list of 26 references, composition pretest/posttest, writing assessment checksheet, proofreading pretest/posttest, and grammar and punctuation pretest/posttest.) (Author/YLB)

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IMPROVING THE KEYBOARDING COMPOSITION SKILLS OF SECONDARY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS THROUGH A STRUCTURED APPROACH

by

Gay E. Parker

Cluster 37

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A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Gay E. Parker under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

June 21, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

Wm. E. Anderson
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is given to my 1991-92 Keyboarding students whose cooperation and enthusiasm helped to create a positive learning experience. Appreciation is also extended to my colleagues for their comments, advice, and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Keyboarding Composition Skills of Secondary Business Education Students Through a Structured Approach. Parker, G., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Youth and Childhood Studies.
Keyboarding/Secondary Education/Composition Skills/Typewriting/Composition/Proofreading/Free Writing Skills/Teaching Techniques/Editing

This practicum was designed to improve the student's manual keyboarding composition skill. Traditionally, students learn to keyboard from material that is already typed or handwritten and seldom have opportunities to learn the advanced skill of composition keyboarding. Inherent in learning this skill are other requisite skills of well-written composition, accurate punctuation and grammar, and fastidious proofreading.

This writer developed a program to integrate these skills in a structured, progressive plan. To develop the manual skill, the students were dictated questions requiring one-letter responses, progressing to full-paragraph responses as demonstrated each day in a 5-minute warm-up journal writing.

The students received instruction in the "7 Cs," of writing as applied to business letters; opening, closing, and informational paragraphs; rewriting poorly written letters; practice in punctuation, grammar, and proofreading techniques; and actual business situations were used along with cooperative teaching techniques and writing games.

Pretest and posttest evaluations revealed substantial improvement in written composition, punctuation and grammar, and proofreading. Each student was able to master the manual composition keyboarding skill to the extent of comfortable enjoyment and good content productivity.

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Permission Statement

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

This school was built in 1974 on forty acres of land in a rural community. It is basically an academic public school with a large vocational department, comprised of grades nine through twelve.

Because of accelerated growth in the last ten years, the area surrounding this school has become a suburb of a metro-development process with a growing school population. Additional land adjacent to the school has been purchased and more land is sought to expand the campus. It is predicted that this school will become the largest secondary school in the state within the next five years.

The September 1990 student enrollment at this school was 2,370 students. There are 546 students in the twelfth grade, 556 students in the eleventh grade, 573 students in the tenth grade, and 695 students in the ninth grade. The racial population consists of 81 percent white, 6 percent black, 10 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 1 percent American Indian. The general enrollment figures for this school have increased at a slow, steady rate each year due to the growth in the community, with the Hispanic student growth rate increasing the most rapidly.

During the 1990-91 school year, 29 students dropped out of school, representing a 2.99 percent dropout rate. One student dropout was related to the seasonal migrant labor

force. Remediation courses and extensive counseling are offered to address the needs of potential dropouts, as well as the needs of those students who have applied for withdrawal.

The 1990-91 school year also revealed that there were 254 student withdrawals. Over 39 percent of the withdrawals were attributable to moving out of the area. Twenty-nine percent of the withdrawals attended adult high school or transferred within the district. Sixteen percent of the withdrawals terminated school due to academic problems.

The percentage of tenth-grade students passing the State Student Assessment Test (SSAT I) decreased from 1989 to 1990, in reading and mathematics, with the scores increasing in writing by 1 percent. Overall, the SSAT I scores exceeded district and state averages. The SSAT Part II, known as a functional literacy test, must be passed to receive a standard high school diploma. Mathematics scores decreased dramatically in 1990 and communications scores remained the same. While these scores exceeded the state averages, they were 2 to 4 percent lower than the district scores. The school is developing a plan to improve this school's standing within the district as well as at the state level.

Both vertical and horizontal articulation exists between this school and its feeder, middle schools. Course offerings are coordinated when feasible, and gifted and

special problem-area students are identified so that the school can best meet their needs.

Many courses within the school are enriched by the use of supplemental audiovisual materials available from local media centers, colleges, civic clubs, and other resources in the community. School events are published in community newspapers, with many local businesses supporting student activities. Presently, this school is preparing to install two networked computer labs. Although this school has not made many technological advancements, extensive plans have been developed to correct this deficiency.

A local school advisory committee gives input into curriculum development and policy revisions along with the Parent/Teacher/Student Association. The 1990-91 membership in this organization was 1,344. One of this school's students was elected to the National Board of the Parent Teacher Association. This student is one of only three students in the United States to be elected to this position.

Surveys on the parents' occupational status and educational levels were conducted. The surveys revealed that a majority of the male parents were involved in managerial, military, or other professional careers. The employed female parents were most commonly employed in clerical and managerial positions. Sixty-six percent of the adults attended some form of school beyond high school.

Forty-seven percent of the adults received a bachelor's degree, and fourteen percent received advanced degrees.

A school-based survey was also conducted to assess the attitudes of students, faculty, and parents concerning the school climate (School Yearly Report, 1991). In general, all three groups expressed satisfaction with the school/community environment.

The vocational department has a large enrollment of 840 students. In the full-year prerequisite courses alone, which are Practical Business Skills for grade 9 and Typing I Fundamentals for grades 10, 11, and 12, there are 311 students. The vocational department offers a complete program for Clerical Occupations, Secretarial Occupations, and Accounting Occupations. However, many of the students enrolled in a vocational course are academic-tracked students desiring skills that will be used for college and career goals. Students enrolled in Practical Business Skills and Typing I Business Fundamentals classes, therefore, are comprised of students with a variety of career and academic goals.

The students register for classes in March of the previous school year. Although there may be several changes before school starts in the Fall, registration statistics reveal that this writer will have 25 students enrolled in Typing I Business Fundamentals, which is basically a keyboarding class emphasizing business applications. The

students will not only learn keyboarding skills, they will be required to learn several letter styles, various business forms, report formatting, office procedures, and charts and tables. Both alphabetic keyboarding and numeric keyboarding are taught.

The students in this writer's class are in grades ten through twelve and range from low achievers to high achievers, with a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. There are 17 female students and 8 males enrolled. Thirteen students are white, 5 are black, 6 are Hispanic, and 1 is Asian. The students in this study are enrolled in Typing I Business Fundamentals, which is basically a keyboarding class with business applications.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

There are eight teachers in the vocational department. This writer is one of the eight teachers, with sixteen years of secondary school teaching experience and five years of experience teaching in the migrant and vocational areas at the community college level. A Bachelor of Arts degree was earned in 1975 inBusiness Education; a Master of Science degree was earned in 1985 in Administration and Supervision, and an Educational Specialist degree was earned in 1987 in Adult Education. Currently, this writer specializes in teaching Accounting I, Accounting II, and Practical Business Skills, which encompass grades nine through twelve in mixed grade-level classes at the secondary level. This writer

also teaches Accounting I and Accounting II at the college level on a part-time basis.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

A major problem in this writer's secondary Practical Business Skills class was the students' lack of keyboarding composition skills. These students were unable to compose while keyboarding on a typewriter or computer without first using a hand-written rough draft. Traditionally, students learn to keyboard from material that is already typed or handwritten and seldom have opportunities to learn the advanced skill of composition keyboarding. The transition from keyboarding using typed material to keyboarding from thought is an instructional area which has received inadequate attention in recent years.

As a result of the lack of instructional emphasis, the students were unable to compose various business documents without first handwriting a rough draft. If the students developed the advanced skill of composition keyboarding, they would be able to efficiently keyboard and compose effective business documents that are grammatically correct and error free without first using a hand-written rough draft.

Keyboarding composition is the manual skill where the student is able to keyboard from thought rather than from material that is already typed. Inherent in this skill is the student's ability to produce well-composed communication that is grammatically correct and punctuated accurately.

The student must also have the ability to proofread his work carefully and make necessary revisions.

Composing at the keyboard is an advanced keyboarding skill. It requires the student to type from thoughts in an organized manner. The thought process and the decisions that must be made require much more practice and instruction than is normally provided in the classroom. When the student keyboards from material that is already typed, the student does not have to decide when to capitalize a word, when to use a comma, where to divide a word, or where to end a line, etc. These decisions have already been made.

When composing from thoughts and not from handwritten or typed material, all of these areas become concerns. These concerns must be addressed while the student is still concentrating on the location of keys and building keyboarding speed. Thus, the skill of keyboarding composing is highly technical, extensive in content, and requires a high degree of concentration and practice.

When the students in this writer's class were asked to compose a request letter, a letter of application, or a response letter at the keyboard, they were unable to complete the assignment. They often resorted to handwriting their assignment before it was typed. If they were instructed not use a handwritten rough draft, they became frustrated, produced documents that were poorly written and

contained many punctuation and grammar errors as well as many keyboarding errors.

While it was not expected for students to possess keyboarding composition skills at the beginning of the school year in this writer's classroom, it was expected that the students would have learned the basics in writing, punctuation, grammar, and spelling. However, when the students were instructed to handwrite a letter of response, it was evident that there continued to be a need to develop and practice these basic communications skills. Very little improvement occurred during the school year.

The students would also spend an inordinate amount of time attempting to complete assignments. When asked to compose at the keyboard an average length letter (101 to 200 words), they were unable to complete the assignment within one class period of one hour. Because the students lacked keyboard composition skills, the broader need for these skills for entry-level employment was unmet.

Keyboarding composition skills may be generalized to other areas. For example, a student may use the skills to keyboard personal letters and reports for other classes, as well as assignments in college. Managers and business executives may prefer to keyboard their own correspondence, and teachers may want to keyboard classroom instructional material. Without a developed composition keyboard skill,

much time may be wasted handwriting rough drafts. Thus, a valuable employment skill had not been learned.

In this writer's 1990-91 keyboarding class, none of the students were able to compose and keyboard an average length business letter without using a handwritten rough draft. All keyboarding students should develop this skill by the end of the school year. The students should be able to compose documents that are grammatically correct, accurately punctuated, clearly and concisely written, and are proofread carefully.

If the students developed the advanced skill of composition, the students would be able to compose business letters efficiently, grammatically correct, and error free. They would not look upon composing at the typewriter as a threatening procedure, but rather as something which they feel capable of handling effectively and from which they can gain much self-satisfaction.

At the secondary level of education, grammar and punctuation skills are not emphasized. It is assumed that the students have acquired these skills in middle school. However, the students continued to have difficulty with these skills in this writer's keyboarding classes. When the students were asked to prepare a business request letter, for example, the letters were never grammatically correct, and punctuation errors were prevalent.

The students also failed to proofread their work accurately. Often, they did not proofread their work at all. Observations in this writer's classroom revealed that it was not uncommon for a student to complete a keyboarding assignment, remove it from the typewriter, and never look at it again.

The students' lack of keyboarding composition skills was a major problem in this writer's keyboarding classes. None of the students in this writer's 1990-91 keyboarding classes were able to compose a business letter without using a handwritten rough draft. If the students developed the advanced skill of composition, the students would be able to compose well-written business letters efficiently, grammatically correct, and error free. They would not look upon composing at the typewriter as a threatening procedure but rather as something which they feel capable of handling quite effectively and from which they can gain much self-satisfaction.

Problem Documentation

The problem of the students' lack of keyboarding composition skill can be documented in a number of ways. It can be documented through county-wide and school department meetings, through research literature, through interviews with business persons, and through base-line data from this writer's 1990-91 keyboarding class.

In a 1990-91 county-wide meeting of keyboarding teachers, the need to update the business curriculum was discussed based on recommendations from the Department of Education. According to Betty Castor (1990), Commissioner of Education, "If recent trends continue, up to three-quarters of the new employees through the year 2000 will have insufficient verbal and writing skills" (p. 3). The area of composition keyboarding skills was discussed as an area in need of instructional emphasis that would incorporate the manual skill of composition as well as an opportunity to improve the student's written composition skill. It was, therefore, included in a list of recommendations compiled by the participants. Each school in this writer's district had representation at the meeting.

Following this meeting, this writer's vocational department meeting continued the discussion. Each teacher reported that very little emphasis had been placed on composition skills in the classroom and that improvement in this area was not only necessary, but that it would extend the building principal's recommendation to enhance student learning through the integration of course offerings. It was decided that because Business English is not taught in this writer's school, the integration of keyboarding and Business English would be appropriate. Business letter writing, grammar, and punctuation are taught in a Business English class.

Research literature expounds on the continued need for keyboarding emphasis in the technological age. The Commission on Vocational Education recommended that schools completely "integrate academic and vocational education if they are to successfully prepare students for life in the information age" (Castor, 1990, p. 7). Gades (1983) reports, "As keyboards become common on the desks of management as well as clerks and secretaries, the need to compose at the keyboard becomes more important" (p. 27). A 1983 questionnaire was sent to 250 randomly selected employers in Arkansas to identify the areas in which they felt secretaries needed improvement. Sixty percent of the respondents from manufacturing firms, banks, hospitals, insurance agencies, and legal firms indicated a need to improve written composition skills (Bennett, 1986).

Larson (1985) suggests that if "potential employers are complaining that our students lack the language skills necessary to effectively utilize the typewriter, then let's train them to function beyond that point" (p. 34). Thus, Larson's (1985) recommendation to make communication skills an integral part of keyboarding remains a vital point today.

In an interview with a local business executive for a major defense firm, the desire for all employees to be able to compose at the keyboard to reduce time on task and increase productivity was expressed: "In the past my staff dictated to secretaries who would then type the documents.

Today, that takes too much time and my staff must be able to use software, such as Lotus and Harvard Graphics. These cannot be dictated" (S. Nouskhajian, personal communication, March 22, 1991).

Roderick (1986) also encourages business education teachers to update their keyboarding classrooms to meet the changing needs in a technology literate office. For example, she reports, the productivity of executives is increased when they learn to compose at the keyboard, especially when the office uses electronic mail.

Base-line data from this writer's composition keyboarding tests for the period of the 1990-91 school year revealed that none of the students were able to compose an average length business letter (101 to 200 words) in a business style that was well written, error free, and grammatically correct.

A lack of proofreading skills is part of the problem in this writer's class. According to this writer's observation, approximately sixty percent of the students cannot produce an error-free typed document when keyboarding from typed material due to the lack proofreading skills. In an information-oriented age, electronic mail and computer systems have greatly increased the speed of transmitting communications and increased the need for instant information. As a result, the time needed to proofread documents is often limited (Camp, 1983).

To increase productivity in the office, proofreading skills must be taught effectively at the secondary school level, according to Shell (1982):

> We cannot be content to hope that students will somehow learn to proofread on their own. Proofreading skill is not incidentally, casually, or occasionally learned. Only what is explicitly and purposefully taught by regular, intensive practice will be learned. This type of practice is not a common activity in most typewriting classes, but it should be. (p. 8)

In an interview conducted by this writer, a Tampa, Florida attorney asked why typists lack proofreading skills: "The biggest problem I have is getting my secretaries to proofread their work" (S. Hicks, personal communication, March 1986).

Many companies invest heavily in equipment with the expectation of increasing productivity in their offices. Rubin (1981) cites an example of a major New York bank hiring a consultant to increase productivity in its word processing department. As a result of the study, the consultant determined that almost ninety percent of the keyboarded material had to be retyped. It was determined that the problem did not lie with the equipment, but was the result of poor proofreading skills by the staff.

There is an abundance of evidence that the keyboarding composition skills of secondary students need to be improved. The area of composition skills includes the manual skill, the written skill, and the proofreading skill,

all of which can be improved with greater emphasis and creativity and will result in greater employment opportunities for the students.

Causative Analysis

There were several reasons why the students had not developed good composition keyboarding skills. An underlying cause was the lack of instructional emphasis in composition keyboarding. Often the skill was not taught at all. Livingston and Giovannini (1982) reported that students were often instructed to compose and type assigned material without previous preparation. The lack of previous preparation may cause the students to "become frightened and may even develop a mental block of where to begin or how to arrange the information" (p. 12).

Teachers were also afraid to use too much class time to develop this skill, which was perceived to be at the expense of required content areas. Sustaita (1981) argued that "composition at the machine helps students learn to type at the word level, since they are not thinking strokes, but of words" (p. 163).

Other teachers believed that they do not have the background knowledge to teach the skill. Business education has always been concerned with preparing students for office-related careers, with the emphasis on manual skills such as shorthand and keyboarding. Today, however, educators must learn to modify their courses to meet the

demands of a changing business world with the emergence of the informational era (Sox, 1988).

The lack of appropriate materials and equipment also inhibited the instructional process. Edwards (1991) explained, "one of the greatest tragedies is that you can walk into vocational classrooms throughout this country and see equipment left over from the Korean War" (p. 1).

Gangel (1983) further stated "that keyboarding is increasingly becoming an employment prerequisite even though the professional use of typewriting hardware will decrease, the computer-related demand for keyboarding skills will increase" (p. 25). He emphasized that an electric typewriter will suffice in the task, and the lack of computers should not be used as an excuse for a lack of instructional emphasis. He also recommends that all "introductory typewriting classes should be oriented toward skill carry-over which would apply to computers" (p. 25).

In this transition, educators may forget to teach the basics such as grammar skills, punctuation skills, and proofreading skills. With the advent of technology in today's office, a false sense of security may arise with the availability of computer editing features, such as spell check and thesaurus. However, no matter how sophisticated office equipment may become, software with built-in correcting features cannot detect all errors (Camp, 1983). Therefore, Bennett (1986) warns that with the current

emphasis on technology skills, the continuing need to teach basic skills should not be overlooked.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Keyboarding is not only a major means of written communication in business today, it has become essential to the efficiency of the modern office as well as in one's personal life (Robinson, 1981). No longer is it a skill needed only by secretaries. Many professionals, such as managers and executives, find it enhancing to their productivety. Homemakers, college students, and hobbyists are also finding a need for the skill.

Today, those who have learned this skill have an important advantage over those who have not learned to keyboard and are considerably more valuable to a business organization. Nouskhajian states, "the ability to compose at the keyboard saves time on task and increases productivity" (personal communication, May 4, 1991). Further, the increasing use of electronic communication in business and in homes will continue to make keyboarding a necessity (Robinson, 1981).

Traditional typewriting courses have been focused on teaching the manual skills needed to do secretarial work. In today's office, the typewriter has been replaced with word processing equipment, mainly the computer. These skills include the mathematics of centering material, column layouts, and planning page layouts. The technological

change from typewriters to word processing equipment, has necessitated the need to change the focus of the typewriting class to more universal skills, referred to as keyboarding skills (M. Parker, personal communication, October, 1991).

Keyboarding, an outgrowth and extension of traditional typewriting, is more universal in its scope. This scope not only includes the growth of the population it is applicable, but also includes the need to develop greater manual efficiency skills, such as manual composition skills. According to Rhodes (1987), "Efficient keyboarding will demand a touch control of the basic alphabetic keyboard. The term "touch" implies the striking of the various keys without the need of visual guidance--or looking" (p. 39).

The manual keyboarding composition skill is generally not taught in a keyboarding class or is very lightly touched upon. However, with a plan and some creativity this skill can easily be incorporated into the content of a keyboarding class with early planning.

Delman (1988) describes two problems when instruction changes from keyboarding from typed material to keyboarding from thought. First, he reports that students almost invariably will begin to look at their fingers. Second, the students will also experience difficulty in "composing, organizing, and typing their own sentences and paragraphs" (p. 18).

Delman (1988), therefore, recommends extensive practice before attempting to compose after the all the keys have been learned. He advised that the students practice keyboarding one-word responses to questions. For example, the teacher can ask the students to keyboard five of their favorite animals. This activity progresses to keyboarding a complete sentence response and then to a complete paragraph.

Sustaita (1980) recommended that keyboard composition skills be taught throughout the school year to alleviate students' fears and frustrations of composing. He outlined five basic steps that include word response, phrase response, sentence response, paragraph response, and integrated composition. Each step should allow time for the students to become comfortable with the skill. Above all, Sustaita stated, "It is important to remember that composition should be an enjoyable skill to learn" (p. 163).

A planned and structured approach is recommended by Delman (1988). In order to make a smooth transition from typing printed copy to composing at the keyboard, there is a need to provide students with a variety of practice exercises before they are allowed to compose at the keyboard. Delman's planned program begins with typing one-word responses to listed items, progressing to typing complete sentences to describe a physical object, and concluding with keyboarding related items to develop paragraphs.

Although Livingston and Giovanni (1982) also believe that keyboard composition is a gradual process, they offer a different approach by directing students to retype sentences containing punctuation, spelling, or word usage errors. This activity progresses to completing partial sentences and then adding sentences to conclude a paragraph. The final phase requires the students to compose full letters.

Delman's (1988) approach is similar to Sustaita's (1981) approach but is more structured and provides for more variety in practice. Both Delman and Sustaita ignore the grammatical aspect of composing, while Livingston and Giovanni rely heavily on the mechanics of written composition. None of these plans address the need for well-written composition. It is obvious that once the manual skill has been developed, the skill is almost useless unless the students are able to clearly convey a written message.

According to Varner (1988), "Good writing requires planning, and effective planning requires thinking about the receiver, the format of the message, the purpose of the message, and the major areas to be covered" (p. 17). Varner advocated that a student plan with paper and pencil if the student is going to compose at the keyboard instead of keyboarding from a written rough draft. These plans should be monitored by the teacher.

Student interest and increased motivation can be captured by drawing assignments from the local business

community according to Waner (1989). She further stated, "because students need experience writing the types of materials that are used in the business world, the course work you assign them should closely resemble the work actually performed in business and industry" (p. 4).

Berteleson and Guatney (1989) used a six-step question "road map" to aid students in writing (p. 7). Six questions serve as checkpoints:

1. Why am I writing this message?
2. What does the receiver want and expect from me?
3. What information must be collected to fulfill the receiver's requirements?
4. What are the benefits to the receiver?
5. How should I approach the receiver?
6. What significant points must be covered in the message? (p. 8)

With funding cutbacks in education, many schools can no longer offer separate communication vocational courses. Hammer and Roderick (1985) described an enrichment project that integrates communication skills into an existing course. In this project, the students chose an area of interest such as automobile insurance. The student then writes an inquiry letter, arranges an interview with insurance agent, prepares a report of the findings, and presents the information to the class in an oral report. The inquiry letter, according to

Hammer and Roderick (1985), is an easy and nonthreatening letter for a student to write and gives the teacher the opportunity to discuss the "7 Cs" of good writing (p. 38). The "7 Cs" include completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy, and correctness.

Sheppard (1985) suggested that having the students write a letter of complaint is an opportunity to teach them to stand up for themselves in a "professional and business-like manner" (p. 36). The students may also receive a tangible reward for their efforts. She says that her students are allowed to write a letter about anything from "a can of cherry pie filling with a pit in it to a craft kit with a part missing" (p. 36).

Each student, according to Sheppard (1985), is instructed to gather all the information about the product to include price, date and place of purchase, sequence of events explaining the customer's dissatisfaction, receipts, canceled checks, warranty cards, and the name and address of the place to send the complaint. The student is then instructed to begin the letter by stating the exact nature of the problem, followed by stating what the student believes the manufacture should do to remedy the problem. Above all, Sheppard (1985) advocated that anger never helps the situation and may merely brand the writer as a

"crackpot" (p. 36). As a learning experience, Sheppard (1985) stated, "not only does this exercise provide down-to-earth experience in developing business composition skills, but it teaches students how to be calm, cool--and collect" (p. 36).

Writing skills are more important in the electronic office today. Satterwhite (1986) promoted incorporating writing practice into any class by giving at least one essay question on every test or assigning homework that requires composition. When writing businesses messages the students should learn to ask themselves three questions: "Will the reader understand the message?" "Is the tone of the message positive?" "Will the message accomplish its purpose while building goodwill?" (p. 25). Each message, according to Satterwhite (1986) should follow the five "Cs"--"complete, concise, clear, courteous, and correct" (p. 26).

There has been a great deal of literature written about the importance of proofreading skills, methods of teaching proofreading skills, and proofreading techniques. Proofreading and editing skills are a prerequisite to composition keyboarding. These skills must be learned before students are ready to compose an entire business letter (Larson, 1985).

Shell (1982) advocates setting aside special class time to allow time to proofread. Time must also be provided to treat proofreading as a separate skill, which should be practiced daily. Shell (1982) recommended that the teacher slowly read the document to the class instead of instructing the students to proofread on their own. Although Shell readily admits that the skill needs to be taught, he offered no techniques with which to comply.

Ober (1984) took the skill of proofreading further by listing three types of errors to look for--typographical, format, and content. He further defined errors as major, correctable, and minor. Daily practice was not recommended, but grading for proofreading was advised.

Proofreading techniques were offered by Willhite (1985). Using a proofreading card, reading backward, reading aloud, exchanging papers, and double checking numbers, names and words in subject lines and headings are techniques that facilitate finding errors. Although the techniques were offered, Willhite did not recommend setting aside class time for proofreading as did Shell (1982).

In a similar recommendation, Simon (1987) offered the techniques of the paperbail method, the angle method, reading aloud method, reading backwards, and

the cooperative method. Unlike Shell (1982), Ober (1984) and Willhite (1985), Simon believes that the students should be taught where most proofreading errors occur and common type of errors. Simon (1987) described a development plan that begins as early as the first week of school, includes a grading scale, and emphasized the need to stress the importance of proofreading to the students.

Larson (1985) believes that students should be graded on accurate proofreading rather than on an accurate copy which will prevent "undue attention to looking at keys and choking up for fear of making a typing error" (p. 31). She insisted that students use proofreaders marks when editing.

Some teachers worry that taking time each week to teach written composition and keyboard composition skills will hurt the student's typing speed (Larson, 1985). Gades (1983) found in two studies that "those students who learned to type using a composition approach made significantly fewer errors on straight copy typing," and speculated that this was a result of greater concentration on what was being typed (p. 27).

Proofreading, editing, grammar, and content are all necessary elements to developing a good written and manual composition skill. Shell (1982) stated:

> Students who know how to operate the keyboard mechanically have learned a useful skill, but

> it is not a complete skill if that is all they have learned. A typist is not truly a competent typist if he/she is not able to use the typewriter as an instrument through which to communicate. (p. 52)

Each teacher has the responsibility to instruct students in writing techniques. Areas such as accounting, basic business economics, data processing, marketing and distribution, office skills, and secretary administration are all business-related fields where this skill is vital (Chism, 1984).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The general goal of this practicum was to improve the composition keyboarding skills of secondary keyboarding skills. Composition keyboarding skills include the areas of manual skills, written skills, and proofreading skills. Each of these areas must be purposefully addressed in a planned sequence of events that enable the students to develop competency and confidence in their abilities to compose well-written documents without first using a handwritten rough draft.

Composition keyboarding skills have become more important than in the past with the advent of technology and the increase in the need for fast, accurate information in today's business world as well as in one's personal life.

Behavioral Objectives

The following goals and objectives were projected for this practicum:

1. Twenty-five of twenty-five students will improve their written composition skill and their keyboarding composition skill as demonstrated by composing and keyboarding three business letters of average length (101 to 200 words) and measured by a pretest and posttest test using a writing assessment checksheet (see Appendices A & B).

2. Twenty-five of twenty-five students will improve their proofreading skills by eighty percent as measured by a proofreading pretest and a posttest (see Appendix C).

3. Twenty-five of twenty-five students will become familiar with word processing proofreading methods as measured by attendance and participation at an off-campus computer lab (see Appendix D).

4. Twenty-five of twenty-five students will improve their grammar and punctuation skills by eighty percent as measured by a pretest and a posttest (see Appendix E).

Measurement of Objectives

The measurement of Objective 1 is a performance-based evaluation. The students demonstrated the manual of skill of keyboarding composition by keyboarding three business letters without using a handwritten rough draft. The student was allowed to revise his letters as many times as necessary until he felt comfortable with his product. Since the manual skill of keyboarding composition is not an effective tool unless the message contained in the letter is well- written, this objective required that the student use the manual skill to develop a well written document.

The pretest involved the student keyboarding three typical business-letter subjects--a complaint letter, an inquiry letter, and a request letter. One class period was allowed to complete each letter. However, if a student needed more time, arrangements were made to accommodate his

needs. Four students availed themselves of this additional time. The pretest was not graded according to this writer's school policies to alleviate any inhibiting fears that would interfere with the student's ability to complete the task.

The posttest was administered in the same fashion after implementation of this practicum, using the same business-letter topics. Successful completion of this objective was measured by the increase of "yes" responses for each group of three letters between the pretest and posttest.

The evaluation of well-written business letters was part of the focus of Objective 1. However, a well-written letter is not fully evaluated unless formatting, punctuation, and keyboarding areas have been addressed. These areas are, therefore, included on the composition checksheet.

Again, the evaluation of Objective 2 was a performance-based assessment. The pretest was administered before instruction in proofreading methods and proofreading practice was given. The posttest was administered after instruction had occurred and after the students had regularly practiced the techniques in the classroom as observed by this writer.

The same test was used for both the pretest and the posttest. Since the time between the administration of these tests was seven months, the validity of test/retest was not affected.

Objective 3 was a simple measurement of participation in this writer's school computer lab. Originally, it was planned that the students would visit an off-campus computer lab, but the installation of a new in-house facility negated this necessity. The students spent one week in the computer learning basic word processing functions, which included proofreading and editing functions such as spell check, thesaurus, insert/delete, move text, merge, and scroll. This objective was considered imperative to offer the students exposure to current technology as much as the school facilities would allow. Additional arrangements were made for two absent students to make up the assignment. Successful completion of the objective was measured by a check mark on the Attendance and Participation Checksheet (see Appendix D).

Grammar and punctuation skills were addressed in Objective 4. Part of composing a well-written document includes the mechanics of writing. Even at the high school level, a continual effort to reinforce these basic skills is imperative. Again, the pretest and the posttest were the same in the assessment of this objective. The pretest was administered at the beginning of the school year and was administered again at the end of this practicum, which was after the rules of grammar and punctuation had been introduced and practiced. Successful completion of this

objective was measured by the decrease in errors between the percentage scores of the pretest and the posttest.

Objective 1 encompassed and was partially dependent upon the success of the students to successfully complete Objectives 2, 3, and 4. Each of these objectives enabled the students to reach the Objective 1 goal.

A daily journal was kept by this writer to record any unusual or noteworthy events. The students were also asked to record various notes at the bottom of their assignments that were turned into this writer. These notes addressed particular areas with which the student was having difficulty--a request to repeat an assignment needing more practice, a problem that was difficult for the student, areas that were easy for the student, and/or student recommendations to improve the lesson by adding or deleting items.

This writer reviewed these notes to evaluate the progress of the students and to evaluate the lesson. For example, several students noted that they had difficulty in keeping up with dictated material that required composition keyboarding. This initiated the need to decrease the speed of dictation and increased the practice time in this area.

When a lack of progress was evident, re-evaluation of the teaching methods, evaluation methods, and instructional materials used was conducted so that adjustments were made to accommodate the individual student. During the

implementation of this practicum, student input was highly valued as a means of monitoring individual student progress as well as group progress.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

A major problem in this writer's secondary keyboarding class was the student's lack of keyboarding composition skills. The students were unable to compose while keyboarding on a typewriter without first using a handwritten rough draft. Inherent in the keyboard composition skill is the student's ability to produce well-composed communication that is grammatically correct, accurately punctuated, and is thoroughly proofread.

Generally, this problem was addressed as three separate areas--manual composition, written composition, and proofreading. Often, these areas were not addressed in the keyboarding class or had been very lightly touched upon. Thus, the need to improve the student's keyboarding composition skill remained.

Both Delman (1988) and Sustaita (1981) offered a gradual plan to develop the student's manual composition skill in which the student keyboards one-word answers to progressively longer answers. Livingston and Giovanni (1982) ignored this approach and suggested that the students begin by completing partial sentences leading to composing full letters and relying on the development of writing mechanics. Each of the authors professed success with their techniques.

Varner (1988) advocated that the students plan with paper and pencil and focused on the techniques of writing while ignoring the development of the manual skill. Berteleson and Guatney (1989) offered a similar plan to improve the student's written skill and to use six questions to serve as checkpoints for the students.

Student motivation was addressed by Waner (1989) who believes that writing skills can be developed through the use of real life business materials. This theory was also advocated by Sheppard (1985) who motivated students to write by using a complaint letter and a variety of subjects for the students to write about.

Hammer and Roderick (1985) built upon this approach, but use a more integrated approach using an inquiry letter, interviews, and oral presentation to complete a writing project. However, this approach also included instruction in the "7 Cs" (p. 35). This is similar to Satterwhite's (1986) "5 Cs" (p. 26).

Ober (1984) defined types of errors while Willhite (1985) and Simon (1987) offered techniques such as, the paperbail method, the angle method, reading aloud method, reading backwards, and the cooperative method. Again, the authors were in general agreement on their approaches, and each reported success in the classroom.

Description of Selected Solution

This writer proposed to combine a variety of teaching processes recommended in the literature review with an emphasis on written content in a slow, progressive plan to assure that the composition, both written and keyboarding, was being thoroughly developed. Because this process involved language skills and manual skills not generally integrated in a keyboarding class, the process had to begin at the beginning of the school year and continue through the last grading period. Writing skills, proofreading and editing skills, and keyboarding skills were integrated.

To develop the student's manual composition, this writer used the techniques offered by Delman (1988) where the students began with one-word keyboard responses and progressed to full paragraph responses. This approach allowed for the development of the skill early in the school year and while the student was beginning to learn the keys on the keyboard.

However, this writer incorporated one-letter responses before beginning one-word responses. This technique also allowed additional practice for the student to initially learn the key. Practicing the manual composition skill continued throughout the school year as recommended by Sustaita (1980).

Once the students were comfortable with the manual skill, the written skill was the focus. The students used a

paper and pencil plan to help organize their thoughts as advised by Varner (1988).

The subject material in many instances simulate real life situations by having the students write complaint letters, inquiry letters, resumes, and letters of application, etc. Local businesses were asked to contribute situations in their own businesses, which allowed the students to respond to a real-life situation by writing the letter for the business.

The students received instruction and practice in the "7 Cs" (Hammer & Roderick, 1985). They also received instruction and practice in developing opening letter paragraphs, closing letter paragraphs, and informational paragraphs. They had opportunities to rewrite poorly written letters and adapt well-written letters to other situations.

The proofreading skills offered by Willhite (1985) were taught and practiced frequently. Each student practiced using a proofreading card, reading backward, reading aloud, exchanging papers, and double checking numbers, names and words in subject lines and headings.

Each class began with a five-minute warmup exercise. The initial warmup exercises were used to practice the keys learned the prior day and then progressively included dictating one-letter responses, word responses, phrase responses, and short sentence responses to encourage the

students to develop the manual composition skill. Traditionally five-minute warmup exercises were strictly designed for the students to practice keyboarding from typed material.

In the third month of implementation of this practicum, the five-minute warmup drill was used for the students to compose a daily journal entry. This assignment required the student to mentally compose while keyboarding to develop the manual composition skill. This assignment was saved and compiled into a booklet for each student near the end of the school year. The students prepared a title page for their compiled assignments.

The pretests for grammar and punctuation and proofreading skills were administered in Week 1 and Week 2 of the practicum implementation respectively. These tests preceded instruction in grammar, punctuation, and proofreading. Instruction in grammar and punctuation was interspersed throughout the school year with the students practicing the rules by keyboarding corrections from sentences incorrectly using the particular rule. Again, the students used manual and written keyboarding skills to complete the task. Proofreading instruction and practice was given at the beginning of the second month. However, the students circled errors they found and did not correct them. Grading on any of these assignments was based on circling all of the errors and not on the number of errors

made. This practice also deviated from the traditional method of grading on the numbers of errors the student made.

By the beginning of the third month, the students had learned all of the keys that would enable them to keyboard and compose three business letters as required by Objective 1. These activities set the stage for introducing business-letter formats. The students keyboarded several letters at this time from samples in their textbooks. They were also instructed to complete a proofreading assignment label that reminded the students to proofread their work (see Appendix F). Each assignment was also required to be proofread by another student.

Once letter formats had been practiced and the seven "Cs" of business-letter writing had been discussed, the students began composing partial letters. For example, they were given sample letters with the opening paragraph missing, then letters with the closing paragraph missing, and finally with the missing informational paragraph. The students keyboarded these letters while mentally composing and keyboarding the missing parts.

In the fourth and fifth months, the students received instruction on techniques for writing effective business-letters. These assignments were done cooperatively and concluded with each student composing a personal resume, letter of application, and a follow-up letters. Any of the

completed assignments could be repeated for a better grade with the idea being to encourage proofreading, and editing.

Once the students had the experience of proofreading and editing on an electric typewriter, the class visited a computer lab for demonstration and participation in computer proofreading techniques and editing functions.

The sixth and seventh months of implementation continued the development of mental and manual keyboarding composition, and included a practical real-life application by writing to a business with a concern the student had. There was also an exercise where the students went to the football field to find an item to keyboard and write about. The students played a composing game. Cooperative techniques, proofreading techniques, and manual and mental composing exercises continued.

The last month of implementation of this practicum concluded with a posttest for proofreading, a posttest for grammar and punctuation, and the posttest for manual and written composition. The students were also prepared a title page for their journal writings.

The business letter instruction was given with a review of the parts of a letter, techniques for improving letter effectiveness, adapting letters to other circumstances, and finally composing original letters. The students were given instruction for planning and developing these letters. The students also wrote letters to friends, play an assortment

of writing games, composed letters cooperatively, and wrote letters for local business. Cooperative learning techniques were used extensively.

Report of Action Taken

Implementation of this practicum began in September 1991, which was the beginning of the school year, and continued for eight months. This was a timely implementation because any successful results would continue throughout the school year. The students at this time had not developed any poor keyboarding skills that would necessitate the need for corrective actions. The following is a calendar of events:

MONTH I

NOTE: Each class began a five-minute warmup drill with the students practicing the keys introduced the following day. The warmup drill began when the tardy bell rang.

Week 1. Introduced the homerow keys and the letters O, R, I, and T.

Dictated one-letter key response to begin developing the manual keyboarding composition skill.

Administered Grammar and Punctuation Pretest for Objective 4.

Week 2. Introduced the left shift, period, U, C, spacing with punctuation, return techniques, N, W, G, and right shift keys.

Reviewed spacing after abbreviations, initials, and sentences.

Dictated one-letter key responses.

Administered Proofreading Pretest for Objective 2.

Week 3. Introduced the B, P, M, X, Y, Z, Q, V, and colon.

Dictated one-letter key responses and one-word responses.

Week 4. Introduced shift lock, question mark, punctuation spacing, and tab. Dictated one-letter key responses, one-word responses, and phrase responses.

Reviewed capitalization for beginning a sentence, in personal titles, names of people, cities, states, and other important places.

Dictated one-letter key responses and one-word responses.

MONTH 2

NOTE: Each class began with a five-minute warmup with this writer dictating questions requiring one-word, or short sentences responses.

Week 5. Dictated short sentence responses.

Reviewed capitalization rules for days of the week, months of the year, names of holidays, historic periods, and special events.

Week 6. Introduced 1, 7, 4, 8, 5, 9, 3, and 0 keys.

Dictated one-number responses, one-word responses, short number and word responses, and short-sentence responses.

Reviewed capitalization for names of clubs, organizations, companies, geographic names, regions, locations, street, avenues, and buildings.

Week 7. Introduced 2, 6, number expression rules (house numbers, measures and weights, numbers following nouns), and proofreading symbols for space, insert, close up, delete, and transpose.

Reviewed capitalization for official titles, nouns before numbers, and abbreviations. Review spacing for a colon, in numbers expressing time.

Dictated short-sentence responses.

Week 8. Introduced /, $, %, -, #, &, (,),

Reviewed spacing for these symbols.

Dictated responses requiring one or two sentences.

MONTH 3

NOTE: Each class began with a five-minute journal entry. The students were instructed to keyboard on a half sheet of paper their names, current date, and some item of interest that occurred the day before, etc.

These assignments were saved and compiled into a booklet for each student at the end of the school year.

Week 9. Introduced the apostrophe, quotation mark, underscore, asterisk, and spacing with symbols.

Dictated responses requiring several sentences.

Week 10. Administered Written and Manual Composition Skill Pretest for Objective 1.

Week 11. Introduced business-letter formats. Typed sample letters and discussed the information contained in each sample.

Introduced effective letter-opening sentences. Gave the students letters with the opening paragraph missing with the instruction to compose an opening paragraph.

Week 12. Reviewed word division rules.

Introduced effective letter-closing sentences. Gave the students letters with the closing paragraph missing with the instruction to compose a closing paragraph.

MONTH 4

NOTE: The students continued to record five-minute journal entries during the warmup period.

Week 13. Continued one-word response, phrase response, and sentence response drills.

Continued practicing opening and closing letter paragraphs.

Week 14. Reviewed singular verbs with a singular subject, with indefinite pronouns, with singular subjects

linked by or/nor, singular verbs with collective nouns, singular verbs with all and some.

Reviewed information that needs to be in the body ofa letter i. e., sales letters, inquiry letters, complaint letters.

Gave the students letters with the informational paragraph missing with the instructions to compose and keyboard the missing paragraph.

Week 15. Gave the students letters that were not well written with instructions to rewrite and edit the letters.

Week 16. Divided the class into groups of three or four students to work cooperatively on letter writing.
Gave each group a situation to respond to in a letter format. Each group produced one letter in its final form by the end of the class. The students worked cooperatively to compose the letter, edit the letter, and keyboard the letter. A new letter situation was given each day--sales, inquiry, informational, complaint, invitational, acceptance, and thank you.

Reviewed keyboard hyphens, colons, parentheses, underscore, quotation marks, semicolon, and apostrophe.

MONTH 5

Week 17. Continued cooperative letter activities.

Reviewed plural verbs with a plural subject, with compound subjects joined by the word "and."

Week 18. Continued cooperative letter activities.

Reviewed comma usage after introductory words, phrases, clauses, words in a series, before direct quotations, before and words in apposition, and to set off words of direct address.

Week 19. Introduced resume format, letter of application, and follow-up letter.

Each student typed a rough draft and then keyboarded a personal resume and a letter of application. The students exchanged assignments for critiquing and editing. By the end of the week, the student turned in a final copy of his resume, letter of application, and follow-up letter.

Week 20. Visited a computer lab for one week and participated in keyboarding letters that allowed the student

to use basic word processing functions and editing techniques.

Reviewed comma usage.

MONTH 6

Week 21. The students obtained the address of a business that they had a concern with. This concern was needed for information about a car stereo, a product that was purchased and did not perform to expectation, or perhaps poor service was received. Each student keyboarded, edited, and produced a final copy to be mailed.

Week 22. The students went to the football field and looked for items they would like to write about. They were given sixty minutes to find the item (it could be a rock, a bug, a flower, or something unusual, etc.) and return to class to keyboard two or three paragraphs on their find.

Week 23. The students played a composing game where a student selected a beginning partial sentence, such as, "It was midnight when..., The morning newspaper read..., The teacher turned around and..." Each student was instructed to complete the sentence and continue composing a story. Using a timer, each student keyboards for varying lengths of time (2 or 3 minutes) and then passes his story to the student behind him who quickly read the story and continued to add to it. The instructors told the students when to conclude the story he happened to have. The stories were then read to the class. The students were instructed not to worry about typing errors, punctuation errors, and grammatical errors when composing.

Week 24. Using cooperative learning techniques the students applied for an office manager's position by preparing a resume, a letter of application, and a follow-up letter.

MONTH 7

Week 25. The students composed a short report on the following topic: My Plans Following Graduation

Week 26. The students composed a short report on the following topic: How the Computer Affects My Life

Week 27. The students composed a short report on the following topic: My Life Five Years From Now

Week 28. The students composed one or two paragraphs describing an apple. The students described the apple by size, shape, texture, and smell. Then he described what happens when the apple is peeled and eaten.

MONTH 8

Week 29. The students composed a narrative paragraph on two or three fond childhood memories.

Week 30. Administered posttest for proofreading skills.

Week 31. Administered grammar and punctuation posttest.

Week 32. Administered manual and written composition posttest.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

A major problem in this writer's secondary Practical Business Skills class was the students' lack of keyboarding composition skills. These students were unable to compose while keyboarding on a typewriter or computer without first using a hand-written rough draft. Inherent in this problem was a lack of proofreading reading skills, punctuation and grammar skills, as well as poor written composition skills. If the students developed the advanced skill of composition keyboarding, they would be able to efficiently keyboard and compose effective business documents that were grammatically correct and error free without first using a hand-written rough draft.

This writer proposed to combine a variety of teaching processes recommended in the literature review with an emphasis on written content in a slow, progressive plan to assure that the composition, both written and keyboarding, was being thoroughly developed. To develop the student's manual composition, this writer used the techniques offered by Delman (1988) where the students began with one-word keyboard responses and progressing to full paragraph responses. This writer also incorporated an initial one-letter response in the sequence.

To develop the written composition skill, the students were first allowed to organize their thoughts with paper and

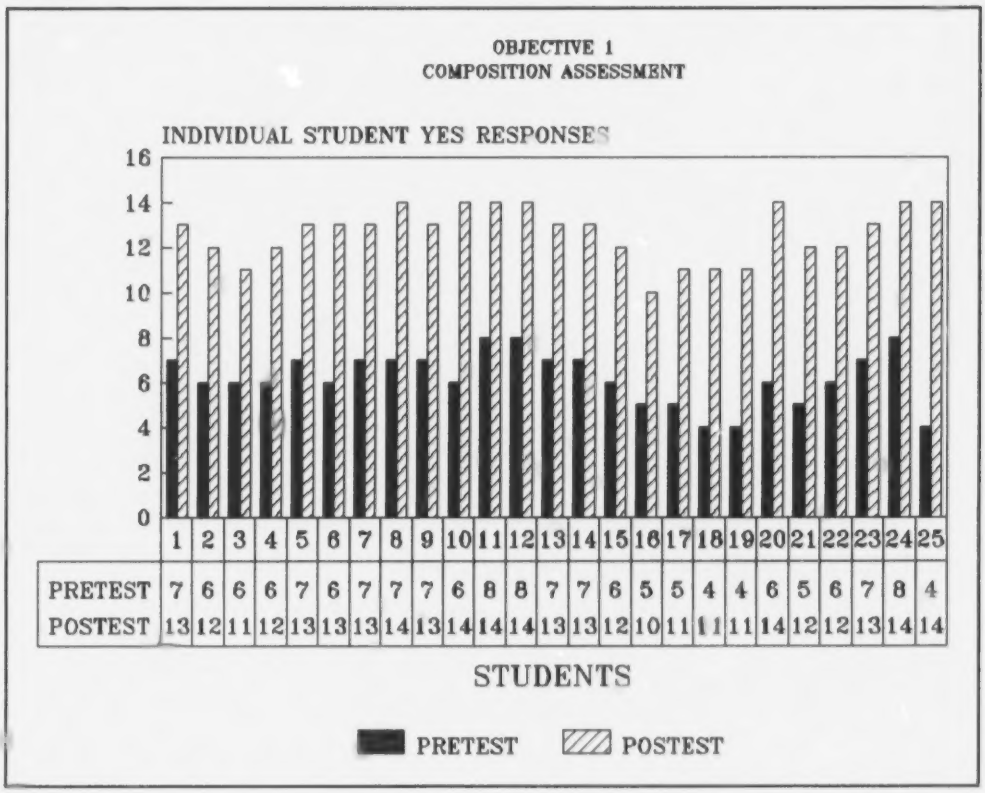
pencil using simulated real life situations that included composing complaint letters, no letters, inquiry letters, resumes, and letters of application, etc. The students also received instruction and practice in the "7 Cs" as recommended by Hammer and Roderick (1985). Rewriting poorly written letters, practicing proofreading techniques, and writing cooperatively, were techniques used.

Objective 1 of this practicum required that all 25 students in this writers' Practical Business Skills class would improve their written composition skill and their keyboarding composition skill as demonstrated by composing and keyboarding three business letters of average length (101 to 200 words). The difference in improvement was measured by administering a performance-based pretest and a posttest using a writing assessment checksheet (see Appendix A & B). The criteria for success was the increase of "yes" responses for each group of three letters from the pretest to the posttest. This objective was successfully met (see Table 1). Table 1 indicates the pretest and posttest scores for each student both in raw scores at the bottom of the table and graphically in vertical bars.

Question 1 on the Writing Assessment Checksheet, concerned with proper business letter format, showed the most dramatic improvement (see Table 2). For example,

Table 2 shows that on the pretest for Question 1, one student received all "yes" responses, but on the postest,

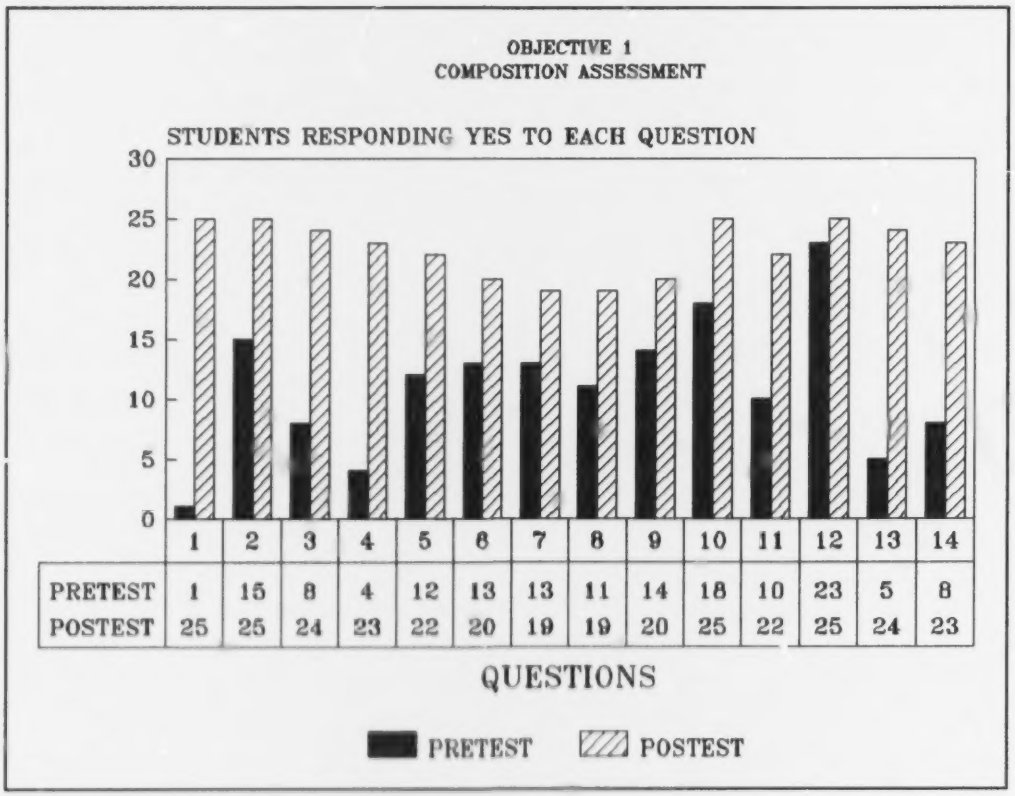
Table 1



all twenty-five students received all "yes" responses. Interestingly, Question 4 on the Writing Assessment Checksheet, regarding a clearly expressed message, also showed a dramatic improvement. Question 12, regarding a neat and clean appearance, showed very little improvement. However, the pretest scores were very high which allowed little room for further improvement.

Each of the twenty-five students made significant overall percentage improvements (see Table 3). No student made less than a seventy-five percent improvement. From the total number of "yes" responses on

Table 2


OBJECTIVE 1
COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT
STUDENTS RESPONDING YES TO EACH QUESTION
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
PRETEST 1 15 8 4 12 13 13 11 14 18 10 23 5 8
POSTEST 25 25 24 23 22 20 19 19 20 25 22 25 24 23
QUESTIONS
PRETEST
POSTEST

the pretest, each student increased that number on the posttest by at least seventy-five percent.

Objective 2 required twenty-five of twenty-five students to improve their proofreading skills by eighty percent as measured by a proofreading pretest and a posttest (see Appendix C). This objective was also successfully met (see Table 4). One student improved his score from the pretest to the posttest by 180 percent. The least percentage of increase was 80.

Table 5 indicates the number of students answering each question correctly. For example, on Table 5, Question 1 was

Table 3

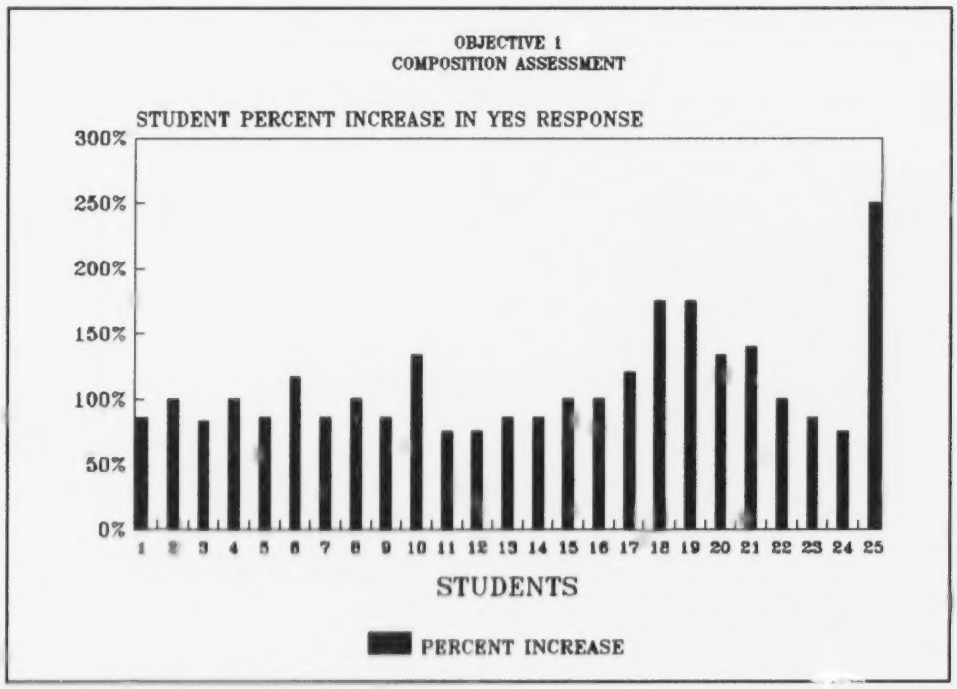
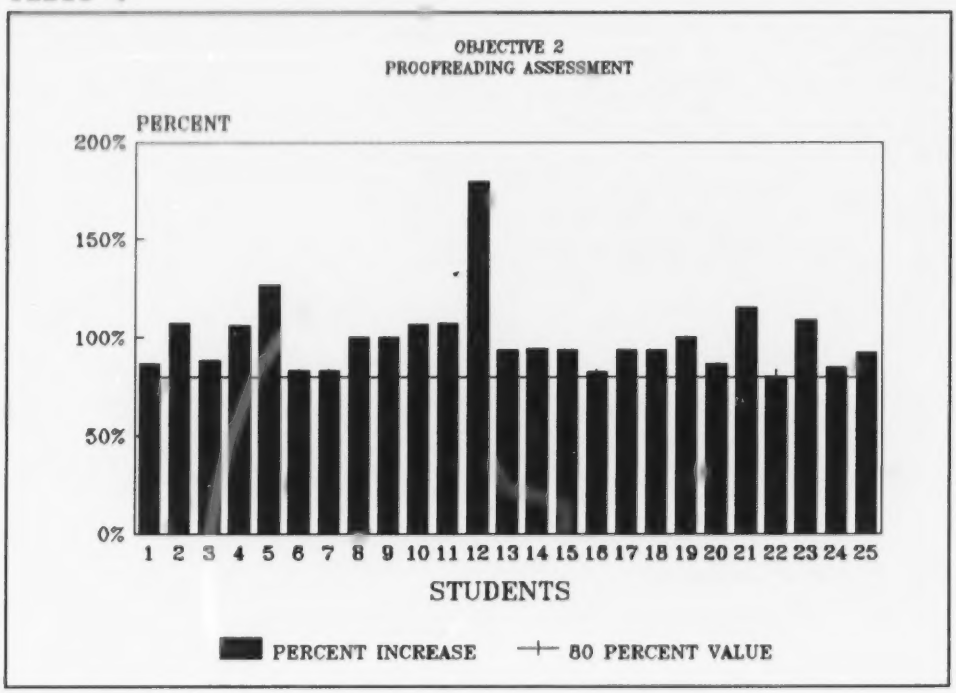
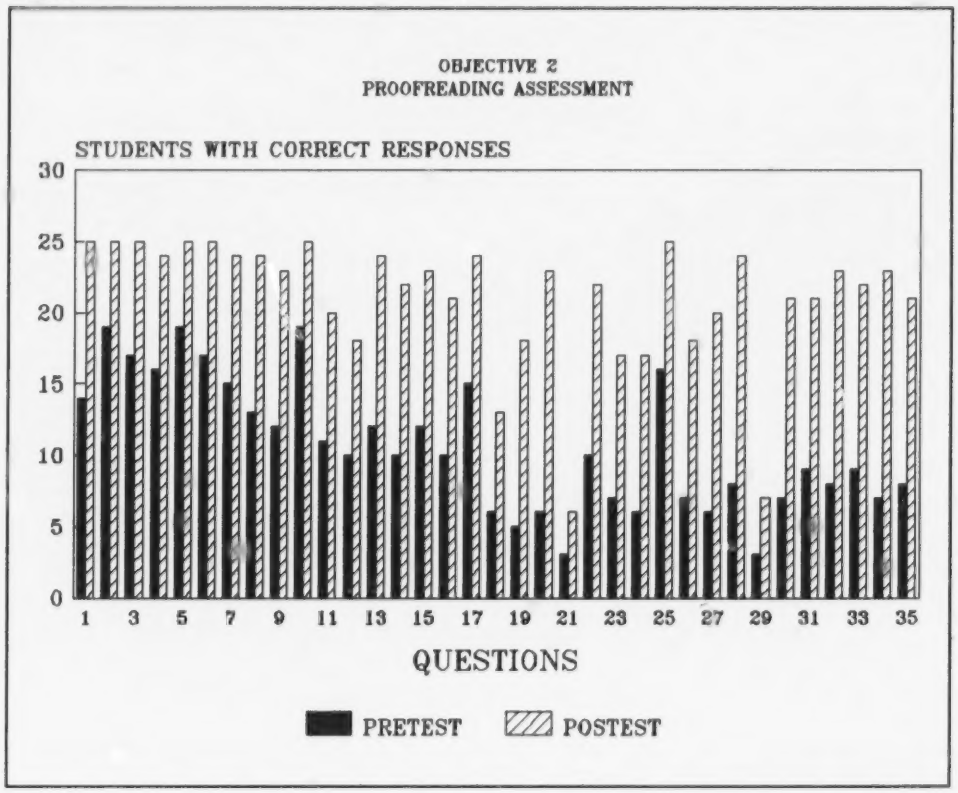


Table 4



correctly answered by 14 students on the pretest and 25 students on the posttest. Questions 21 and 29 had the least number of correct responses on both the pretest and the posttest. Both of these questions required that the students be able to discriminate the difference in spacing between abbreviated words that are closely related, such as "post office" and words that are not closely related.

Table 5

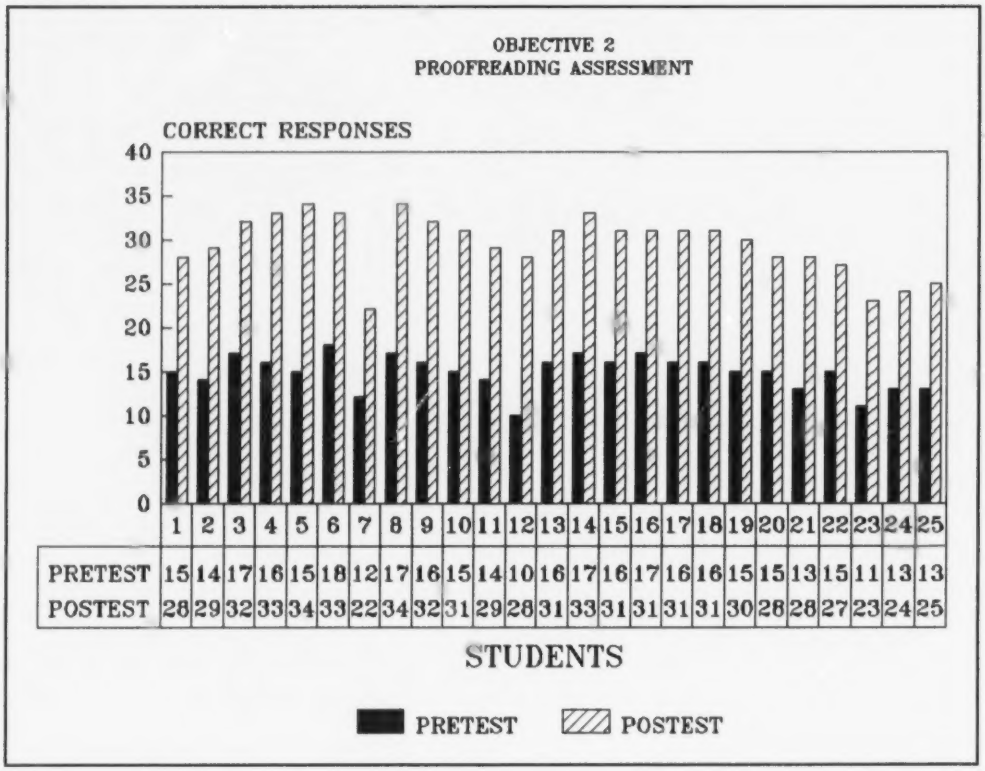


"Post Office" needs no spacing between the initials (P.O.). However, abbreviations for a persons initials, such as R. E. Lee requires a space between the initials because the words

are not closely related. This area apparently needs more classroom instruction, and student practice.

Table 6 gives a breakdown of the number of correct individual student responses comparing the pretest scores to the posttest scores. Again, all of the students made significant gains. The raw scores are indicated at the bottom of the table and graphically in vertical bars.

Table 6



Objective 3 was easily met (see Table 7). All 25 students attended and participated in a visit to a computer lab to review editing functions. Each student was paired with another experienced word processing student from another class who was already familiar with

Table 7

Objective 3

Computer Lab Attendance and Participation

Std	Spell Check	Thesaurus	Insert/ Delete	Move Text	Merge	Scroll
1	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	x	x	x	x	x	x
8	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	x	x	x	x	x	x
10	x	x	x	x	x	x
11	x	x	x	x	x	x
12	x	x	x	x	x	x
13	x	x	x	x	x	x
14	x	x	x	x	x	x
15	x	x	x	x	x	x
16	x	x	x	x	x	x
17	x	x	x	x	x	x
18	x	x	x	x	x	x
19	x	x	x	x	x	x
20	x	x	x	x	x	x
21	x	x	x	x	x	x
22	x	x	x	x	x	x
23	x	x	x	x	x	x
24	x	x	x	x	x	x
25	x	x	x	x	x	x

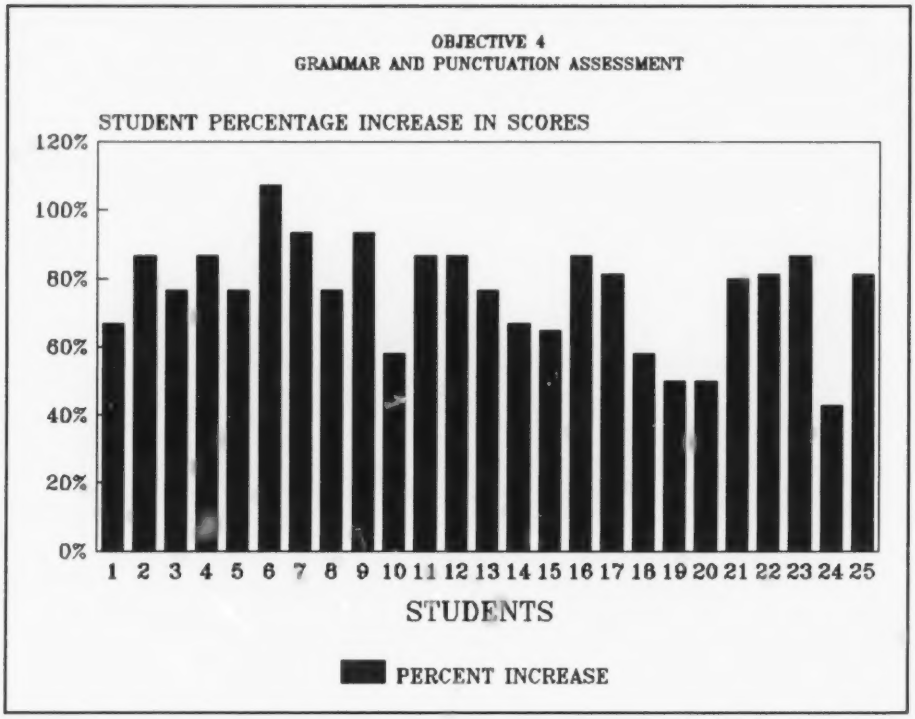
Number of students successfully completing Objective 3 _25_

word processing functions. The mentoring student help to lead the student through an exercise where the students keyboarded three letters of various lengths. Each student also keyboarded a letter that was merged with three different addresses. The students used spell

check, thesaurus, insert/delete, move text, merge, and scroll.

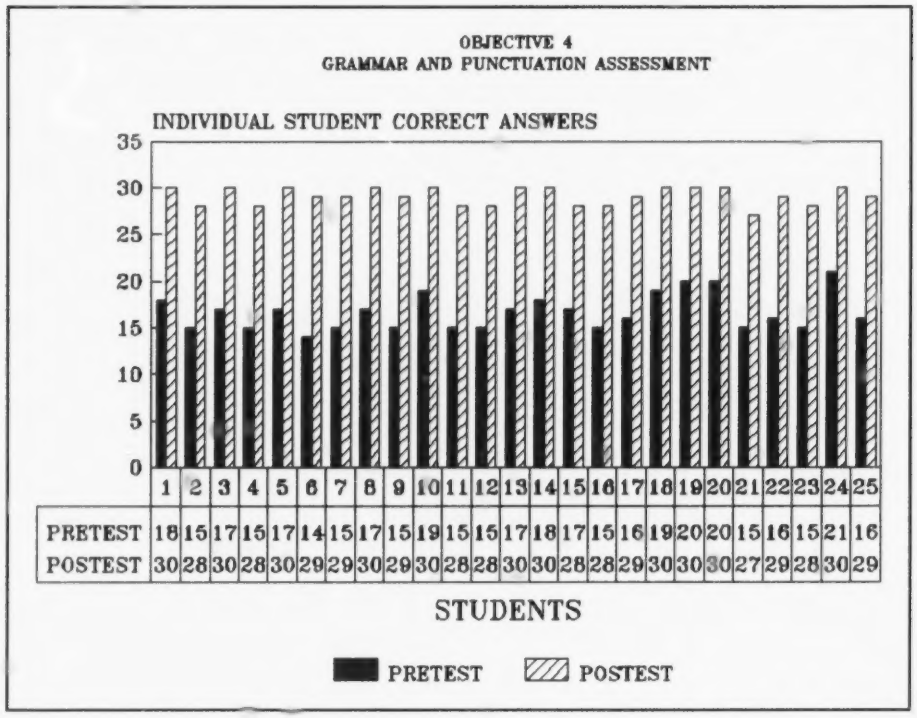
Objective 4 required twenty-five of twenty-five students to improve their grammar and punctuation skills

Table 8



by eighty percent as measured by a pretest and a posttest (see Appendix E). Table 8, when compared with Table 9 indicates that all students successfully met Objective 4. Although several scores on Table 8 indicate percentage scores lower than eighty percent, Table 9 reveals that those percentages were the maximum percentages achievable due to high pretest scores and perfect posttest student scores. Table 8 shows the individual percentage increases. Table 9 shows the raw

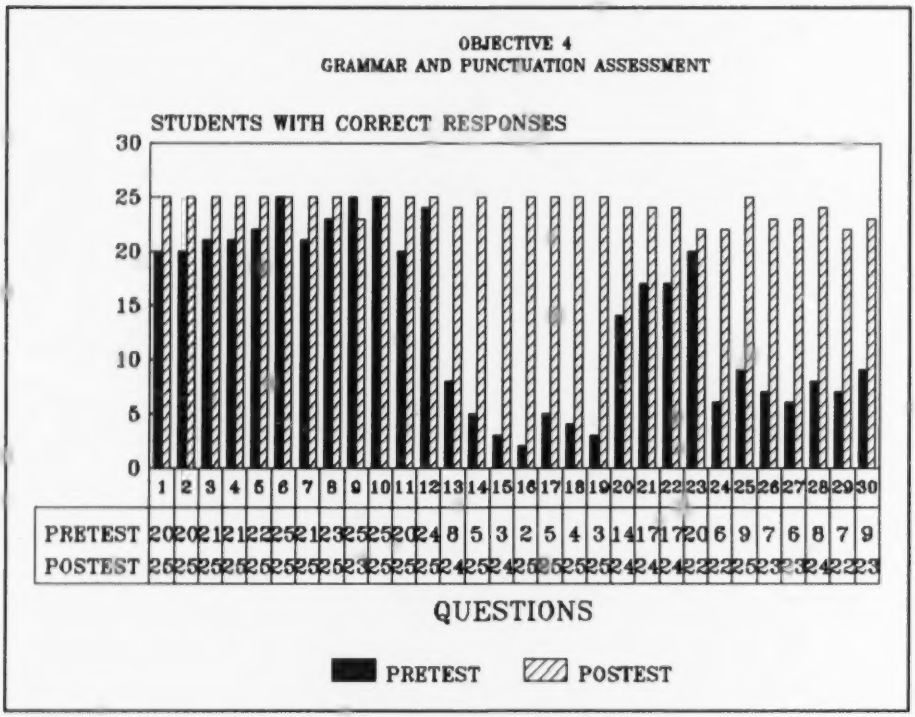
Table 9



scores of correct student answers. For example, student 24 showed only a 70 percent increase from the pretest to the posttest (see Table 8). The pretest score of 21 and the posttest score of 30 represented the maximum achievable improvement.

Table 10 is a compilation of correct answers for the class as a whole and the difference between the pretest scores and the posttest scores. Questions 1 through 12 showed the least improvement due to high pretest scores. This section dealt with only capitalization. For example, Question 6 (see Appendix E) was answered correctly by all students on the pretest as well as on the posttest resulting in no improvement,

Table 10



but representing maximum achievement. Questions 13 through 19 showed the greatest improvement. This group of questions tested for number expression. The low pretest scores indicated little prior instruction or comprehension of the subject material. The intervention instruction resulted in the greatest improvement in student comprehension as measured by the pretest and the posttest. The pretest showed that for Question 13 only 8 students and Question 16 only 2 students responded correctly. The posttest showed that Questions 13 and 15 were answered correctly by 24 students with the remaining students responding correctly to all of the questions in this section.

Objective 4 shows that of the 25 students involved in this project area of grammar and punctuation, had in descending order, prior knowledge of capitalization, verbs, comma usage, and least of all number expression. It is this writer's opinion that students arrive in class with the least amount of prior knowledge in the area of number expression. Thus, one may conclude that special attention needs to be directed in this area to assure student achievement.

Discussion

Several additional benefits were noted during the implementation of this practicum. It is noteworthy to mention that one Hispanic student made remarkable progress in her writing skills in part as a result of the daily journal writings. At the beginning of the school year, even though this student had been in the United States for two years, she was reluctant to participate in the 5-minute daily journal writings. She explained that it was too difficult. Rather than force compliance, she was allowed to continue the 5-minute time period with the traditional keyboarding drill of typing from typed material.

Gradually, and with some encouragement, she attempted to keyboard the journal writings. Her first attempts showed obvious difficulty with the English language. By the end of this practicum implementation

period, her writings improved remarkably. She wrote many paragraphs about her life in Puerto Rico and her daily activities. While she made many spelling errors, these errors decreased dramatically. She often started her assignment before the beginning class bell.

As a result of the positive experience for this minority student, there are implications for integrating keyboarding classes with other classes offered to minority students to improve their language skills. Composition keyboarding focuses the student's attention on the specifics of language.

Another exciting benefit noted as a result of this practicum was the level of student and teacher interest maintained throughout the school year. Keyboarding classes are often very routine, making it difficult to maintain energy levels. This practicum offered so many different activities, including ones where the students were able to leave the classroom for a writing assignment and using personal situations for letter writing, the interest level was maintained to a much higher degree throughout the school year when compared to previous classes. The results were evident especially near the end of the school year with time-on-task being far easier to maintain.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations that would have improved this practicum and made implementation easier. Because of the weekly necessity to provide the students with practice material, it would have been more expedient and easier to use published materials, especially when teaching letter-writing techniques. A classroom set of business English books would have been invaluable. This writer wrote almost all of the material that the student used. This took an inordinate amount of time to prepare. Published materials would have served the purpose equally as well.

A second recommendation is to listen to the students' needs or keyboarded requests. Many of this writer's students felt free, with encouragement, to ask for more practice time or instruction on a particular lesson. Many lessons were altered or repeated based on the needs of the students and their requests. It is a good practice to walk among the students while they are working. Individual questions can be answered or a student can be given a quick demonstration. It was especially important to listen to the students when dictating material that required a keyboarding response, such as one-word responses and short-phrase responses.

Last, this writer would recommend that the daily journal writings be compiled on a 9-week grading period.

The students certainly enjoyed reading their books but had difficulty binding the enormous number of pages. By dividing up the journal, the students may have written about other things or included other items after reviewing their work. Of course, stapling the pages together would have been easier, also.

Dissemination

Dissemination of this practicum will occur at this writer's work site, at this writer's district administrative office, and with instructors participating in the Nova Network. First, this practicum will be shared with other teachers in this writer's vocational department. Each year during pre-planning, instructors in the department are invited to share with other members of the department any new ideas, suggestions, or strategies. This is an appropriate forum to present the strategies and outcomes of this practicum.

Second, with district administrative approval, this writer will prepare a short synopsis and activity list to be shared with other vocational teachers in the county. A copy will be sent to the County Vocational Director for approval and distribution to all county keyboarding teachers.

Third, this writer will also share these materials with other instructors in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and

California who are participating in the Nova Network. These instructors may choose to distribute them to the appropriate teachers at their work sites.

Last, there are several ideas that were incorporated in this practicum that are unique to the business education field. While journal writing has become popular in traditional English classes, this idea has not been implemented in keyboarding classes in place of the normal 5-minute drill usually recommended in a keyboarding class. A journal article describing this technique may be submitted to a business educational professional journal for publication. Another possible publication may describe integrating written composition skills with manual composition skills which serves the purpose of integrating and enhancing learning while emphasizing the often overlooked skill of manual composition.

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APPENDIX A

COMPOSITION PRETEST AND POSTTEST

OBJECTIVE 1

APPENDIX A

COMPOSITION PRETEST AND POSTTEST

OBJECTIVE 1

Instructions: Compose and keyboard a letter for each of the situations below. Please do not use a handwritten rough draft. You may make pencil and paper notes, and you may rekey and revise your letters as many times as you feel necessary. We will use one class period for each letter.

Letter 1

Address your letter to: Ms. Nancy Johnson
Customer Services Manager
Jordan Grove Department Store
P.O. Box 4932
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32805

The Problem: You purchased an item from a local department store. The item has missing parts.

Letter 2

Address your letter to: Mr. Tom Stubbs
Fantasy Travel Agency
3812 Raleigh Avenue
Napa, CA 94558-3311

The Problem: You are planning a trip for your summer vacation and need information from a travel agency.

Letter 3

Address your letter to: Dr. L. W. Evans
Jones Graduate School of Engineering
Los Angeles, CA 900045-3116

The Problem: You are working on a class project entitled, "Telecommunications Today." You would like Dr. Evans, an expert in the field of technology, to be a guest speaker on your behalf.

APPENDIX B

WRITING ASSESSMENT CHECKSHEET

APPENDIX B

WRITING ASSESSMENT CHECKSHEET

		Letters			
		1	2	3	Tot
1.	Does the letter reflect a commonly used business letter format?	__	__	__	__
2.	Is the letter properly addressed?	__	__	__	__
3.	Does the letter begin with a statement of purpose?	__	__	__	__
4.	Is the message clearly expressed?	__	__	__	__
5.	Are specifics included? (Dates, times, dollars, etc.)	__	__	__	__
6.	Is the letter written in a positive tone? (We cannot ship until...We will ship May	__	__	__	__
7.	Does the letter get the reader's attention?	__	__	__	__
8.	Are the sentences clear and concise?	__	__	__	__
9.	Have redundancies been eliminated? (Enclosed you will find...Enclosed is)	__	__	__	__
10.	Does the letter contain an appropriate closing?	__	__	__	__
11.	Has all information been given to the reader?	__	__	__	__
12.	Is the letter neat and clean in appearance?	__	__	__	__
13.	Has proper keyboarding punctuation spacing been used?	__	__	__	__
14.	Does the letter contain appropriate "thank you's?"	__	__	__	__

APPENDIX C

PROOFREADING PRETEST/POSTTEST

APPENDIX C

PROOFREADING PRETEST/POSTTEST

Addresses and Numbers

Is the address in Column B identical to the one in Column A: If it is, place a check mark in the space provided. If it is not, place an "x" in the space. Circle all errors in Column B.

	A	B	
1.	Mr. and Mrs. R. Parker 1321 East Adams Street Daly City, CA 94017	Mr. and Mrs. R. Parks 1321 East Adams Street	_____
2.	Mr. Jules S. Stetson Post Office Box 8053 Athens, GA 30601	Ms. Jules S. Stetson Post Office Box 8503 Athens, GA 30601	_____
3.	Mrs. Toni F. Kiwaski 1806 Franklin Avenue Boston, MA 01202	Ms. Tony F. Hiwaski 1806 Franklin Avenue Boston MA 02102	_____
4.	Mr. Thomas C. Wollendski 1905 East 43d Street Akron, OH 44305	Mr. Tom C. Wollendski 1905 West 54d Street Akron, OH 44305	_____
5.	Mr. S. Nouskhajian Commerce Convention Hotel 1404 Elizabeth Road Kansas City, KS 67218	Mr. S. Nouskajian Commerce Convention Motel 1405 Elizabeth Road Kansas City, KS 67218	_____
6.	Altamonte, FL 32701	Altamont, FL 32701	_____
7.	Providence, RI 02905	Providence, RI 02955	_____
8.	Fort Pierce, FL 33450	Fort Pierce, FL 33450	_____
9.	Hammond, IN 46322	Hammond, TN 43622	_____
10.	Biloxi, MS 39530	Billoxi, MS 39530	_____

Proofreading for Error

Carefully proofread the following paragraphs. Circle any errors that you find. In addition, indicate in the space provided at the left whether the line is typed properly. "R" indicates correct, and "W" indicates incorrect.

R W 11. Just how big the world was amazed C.R. Columbus in
R W 12. in 1494. Passed history tells of men who explored the
R W 13. the seas oceans and Continents. They was brave and
R W 14. some times crazy. Today some historians despute the
R W 15. discoveries of Columbus made on his famous ships-nina,
R W 16. pinto and santa maria. Some persons beleive that he
R W 17. did not discover America but beleive that indians.
R W 18. Thier theories do not seem to important today. Unless
R W 19. your an indian of course. Maybe we better learn write.

Punctuation Spacing

In the left hand column, circle the "R" if the spacing following the punctuation marks are correct. Circle the "W" is the spacing is not correct. Circle all errors within the sentence.

R W 20. Set your margins. Use your paper bail to insert paper.

R W 21. R.M. Davis receives his mail at P. O. Box 1104-34.

R W 22. Today is a national holiday;tomorrow is just a school day.

R W 23. Did you study for your exams?Sue and Kara will study later.

R W 24. Peaches is a record shop located on E.Ivy Street.

R W 25. When class is over today, please be sure to tidy your desk.

R W 26. Are you going to the store? If you are,please buy eggs.

R W 27. I believe that Cherie lives in Kent,Ohio; Fay, in Ft.Lee.

R W 28. Bob,Mary,and Curt plan to attend St.Joseph next year.

R W 29. Bob M.Dyke,the son of W.R. Dyke, is at I.T.T.

R W 30. Mr.O' Neil will be eighty - four years old July 14.

R W 31. He will attend the meeting.Send him an agenda.

Proofreading for Omissions and Repetitions

The paragraphs in Column A are correct. Proofread the paragraphs in Column B to find any omissions or repetitions, and mark your corrections. If a paragraph in Column B is correct, place a check mark in the space provided. If it is not correct, place an "x" in the space provided.

A	B
32. Please consider this letter an application for the accounts receivable clerk you advertised. After my graduation in June, I will have completed 450 hours of business instruction, and I am anxious to join the work force.	Please consider this letter an application for the accounts recievable clerk you advertised. After my graduation in June, I will have completed 450 hours of business instruction and I am anxious too join the workforce. 32. _____
33. Last week our school ordered 450 T-shirts, 380 sweat shirts, and 200 visors. All of these items were to be in our school colors of blue and silver. To our disappointment, the items arrived with the wrong colors. Please let us know the procedure for correcting this problem. We are anxious to begin our fundraising school project.	Last week our school ordered 450 t-shirsts, 380 sweat shirts and 200 visors. All of these items were to be in our school colors of blue and silver. To our disapointment the items arrived with the wrong colors. Please let us no the procedure for correcting this problem. We are anxious to begin our fund raising school project. 33. _____
34. The poster you designed for your school environmental project was excellent. We would like to display it in the main lobby of the school board. Congratulations on such a fine project.	The poster you designed for you're school environment project was excellent. We would like to display it in the main lobby of the School Board. Congradulations on such a fine project. 34. _____
35. Have you considered opening your first savings account? If you have, The First Federal Bank would like to serve you. Our interest rates are the best in town, and we have lowered the initial deposit amount. Please come in to visit us.	Have you considered openning your first savings account? If you have, the First Federal bank would like to serve you. Our interest rates our the best in town and we have lowered the initial deposit amount. Please come in to visit us. 35. _____

APPENDIX D

OBJECTIVE 3

COMPUTER LAB ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D

Objective 3

Computer Lab Attendance and Participation

Std	Spell Check	Thesaurus	Insert/ Delete	Move Text	Merge	Scroll
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						

Number of students successfully completing Objective 3 _____

APPENDIX E

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION PRETEST/POSTTEST

APPENDIX E

Grammar and Punctuation Pretest/Posttest

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each sentence and then keyboard the sentence making the necessary grammar and punctuation changes necessary.

CAPITALIZATION

1. do you plan to go? the taxi will arrive at 3 p.m.
2. ask if corey and karen will ride with ms. lee bailey.
3. will mike visit the oval office in washington, d.c?
4. the dancers meet on tuesday, friday, and saturday.
5. june to august is a very long vacation from school.
6. sue plans to visit her aunt and uncle on christmas day.
7. the fourth of july celebrates the american revolution war.
8. xerox corp. sponsors junior achievement in high schools.
9. the grand canyon is located in arizona, united states.
10. their office is in semeron plaza on elm street.
11. our fbla president spoke with president bush on monday.
12. we have a report from ms. k. l. parker of orlando, fl.

NUMBER EXPRESSION

13. 15 members of 25 have purchased 30 of the 40 tickets.
14. He ordered 10 386 computers, 20 disks, and 2 printers.
15. I will fly on flight 203 at 4:30 p.m.
16. The package measures one foot. by six inches.
17. Check volume 10, section 29, page 36 & 37, lines 3-14.
18. At fifty one Street he took a taxi to 32d Avenue.
19. 60 students passed the 1st time; that is over 1/2 or 55%.

VERBS

20. Some of the work (is, are) done on Monday.
21. A number of persons (has, have) left the office for the day.
22. The boxes (is, are) in the storage room on the top shelf.
23. The dog and the cat (is, are) in the kennel at vets office.

COMMA USAGE

24. On our trip we visited London Paris New York and Rome.
25. She ordered ham and eggs toast hash browns and coffee.
26. The students said "We'll try but it will be hard."
27. John the new president arrived early and left late.
28. Please try Mary to finish this work before you leave.
29. The business letter which you wrote was just great.
30. In 1991 there were 2454 students enrolled in the school.

APPENDIX F

PROOFREADING LABEL

APPENDIX F

Proofreading Label

Name _____ Date __/__/__

Assignment _____

Proofreading
Technique Used _____

Proofreading
Partner's
Signature _____